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FAITH MISUNDERSTOOD

Catholic Doctrines Exaggerated — Unjust Hatred—Her Claims to Truth Sustained by Historical Evidence—Decay of the Ancient Priesthood—Satan's Promise, "Thou Shalt Be Gods," Always Good—Pride of Intellect an Infectious Malady — Dethrones All Classes — Men's Hearts Easily Deluded.

If there is one dominant trait standing out prominently above all others in the attitude of anti-Catholics, it is ignorance. Select most any one of the important teachings of the Church, bring it up for discussion, and you will find a deplorable lack of proper light on the doctrine in question. Added to ignorance, a great deal of unjust hatred is manifested by a portion of the non-Catholic world to the claims of the Church, notwithstanding that the scriptures and human history coupled to tradition substantiate no creed so completely as they do the Holy Roman Catholic Church. In fact, it may be truthfully asserted that they support no other religion in its claims of being the organization erected on the rock of St. Peter's faith, but the latter Church. The events occurring in the history of the Catholic Church are inseparable from a narrative of the world since the time of Christ.

In every age since the fall of man the identical argument that Satan used to seduce our first parents from their love and loyalty to God has been exercised against the truth. The various heretical sects that originated among the Hebrews vented arguments opposed to all obedience, and any human authority except individual reason. At the time when the Messiah began to preach and work His miracles, these sectarians were saturated with pride and the infallibility of the frail intellect. Nor did this condition prevail among the Pharisees and Sadducees alone, but an incredible number of duly accredited priests who had vowed to Jehovah to be humble servants of the people had lost their zeal, piety and humility. But these priests kept within the law and the synagogue for appearance's sake, although they were filled with the same heresies as the sectarians. They sought for the plaudits of men; they preserved ardently and openly their intimacy with the proud, the great and the wealthy; they assumed the airs of masters, forgetting the sublime humility of Abraham and Moses; they strutted through the public places with the commandments on their foreheads; when they fasted they wore long faces so that all might know that they were fasting and they despised the poor. Was it any wonder that they urged the populace on to crucify the lowly and poverty-stricken Carpenter? Of course, there still remained a vast multitude of priests who were true to their ideals. Yet it is a terrible condemnation of God's own chosen Israelite priesthood that when He selected His dearest friends and Apostles He took the commonest and most despised laymen He could possibly find in all the nation—fishermen, publicans and slaves!

What wrought all this? What terrible powers of evil dragged down the Jewish priests, serving with God's seal of authority on them, from the great altitude that they occupied immediately after the Levitical priesthood was instituted. Pride of intellect and position. Slowly, as the years revolved, infidelity followed fast in their wake until this splendid body of men, whom Almighty God sanctified and placed in the world to wisely rule His people, had reached such a low level of degradation and unmasked hypocrisy that they could not recognize their long promised and expected Savior and Creator when He looked them in the face in the sweet vales of Israel. But why should we pity the blindness of that age? Why should we imagine that this generation could not manifest the same sinful stupidity if a like occasion should arise? The same mental darkness that God sends to associate with intellectual pride and the placing on a pedestal of infallibility weak and ignorant human reason is now rampant throughout the world, obscuring the sun of truth and casting a depressing shadow over the earth, except when a momentary ray of light reveals, fast approaching, sinister events.

The above is simply the argument antagonistic to a certain devastating condition. Why is the Catholic Church rejected? Because of the power of Satan to beguile the hearts of men. When the devil alienated Adam and Eve from their duty he said: "Ye shall be as gods, knowing good and evil." So said the reformers to the sixty million Catholics who followed them. "The command you suppose that God has given you, and which you imagine you must keep, is despotic. It cripples your energies, degrades your nature, enslaves its affections. What! Has Christ said, 'Ye must obey the Church lest ye die'? Nonsense. Do not credit such rubbish. God does not desire you to be slaves. Obey nothing but your own reason and desires. Be emancipated from any human being's commandment, whether parent, bishop or priest." It is the same voice of the serpent as of old. Sometimes he urges different sophisms. He says again: "Do not permit anyone to interpret the Bible for you. Such a course enslaves you. One man has as much right to explain the scriptures as another. The human reason is infallible."

The Bible proves many things conclusively: They are the Incarnation; the Seven Sacraments; the honoring of the Mother of God; the establishment of one Church and that the violation of the

ten commandments will cause terrible punishment to ensue. They also prove the existence of evil spirits and a kingdom of sorrow for their habitation, but they nowhere or nowise permit individual interpretation and the creating of sects. "Many wrest the scriptures to their own damnation," says St. Peter in one of his letters. The Catholic Church is attacked by Satan's insidious power in this manner also. "The Church is dangerous to the state." Her children founded or assisted in the foundation of all civilized nations. "She is hostile to liberty." The Catholic Church gave her money and the blood of her children's veins in the battle for human liberty. "It obscures the dignity of human nature; it does not respect the rights of man; it denies private judgment; tyrannizes over the free-born mind; and is in the way of intellectual progress." Such are the insinuations of the cunning serpent, though he well knows that the Catholic Church was the mother of intellectual progress; that she erected the first great universities of the world; that her Popes fought with powerful kings for the rights of man, and that it raised women and all human nature to the highest pinnacle of dignity and honor. Oh, how great is Satan's power to blind the hearts of men and lead them to disobedience, disloyalty and ruin.

RICARDO.

ONE DIVORCE TO EVERY TEN MARRIAGES

Cardinal Gibbons, on hearing last week the latest statistics on divorce in this country, just made public in reports from the census bureau, expressed the gravest concern at the alarming conditions indicated by the figures.

The ratio of divorces to marriages in the United States is given as one to twelve. Cardinal Gibbons points out that it is even greater than that. If the Catholic element is deducted from the total population, he says that the ratio will be more than one to ten.

"The statistics given out by the census bureau," said the Cardinal, "are simply shocking. The revelations are nothing less than appalling. The extent of the divorce evil is so great as to strike at the roots of our social system. I myself am writing and speaking constantly on the subject and I am in sympathy with any effort to check the growth of divorces in this country."

"The government figures show that divorces are multiplying about three times as fast as the population. The figures are the more striking when considered by the side of the figures of Canada, for instance, where the number of divorces is relatively small. Divorces are becoming so prevalent that marriage is getting to be little better than a system of free love."

"People are too much bent on pleasure. Men and women enter the marriage state without regard to the sacred nature of the bond they are undertaking. They look too much upon life with regard only to what pleasure they can get out of it and with too little regard for that solemn word 'duty'."

"It is not the fault of our system of education, but the result of a false, loose interpretation of the Gospel. Every one of the Gospels is opposed to divorce. If divorce is to be checked there must be a stricter regard for the truths of the Christian religion as they are taught by the Catholic Church. If we profess to be Christians, let us be Christians."

"Another reason why divorce is on the increase is found in the attitude of society toward persons who are divorced. In former times a woman who was divorced was shunned. She was not received or recognized in good society and was frowned upon. Now this is not the case. If divorce is to be checked let the divorced persons be shunned."

"Of course the laws on the subject of divorce are responsible to some extent. They should be made more severe. They differ in different states and are in many cases lax. A man forms an attachment for a woman, or a woman for a man, and regardless of any existing marriage bonds, they determine to marry. Under the lax laws they find this easily possible."

"FROM THE DEVIL TO GOD."

Such is the title of a book written by a poet named Rette, who seems to have some renown in France. His standing must have been more than respectable, for he was a friend of Coppee. Rette had been baptized a Catholic, but brought up a Protestant, and soon became an atheist, a Socialist, and a frenzied hater of everything Catholic. One evening at a conference in which he railed at religion with more than usual fury, some friends who appreciated his eloquence asked him afterwards to explain the beginning of the world. Rette was dumfounded. He could not reply, and asked for time to study. He soon discovered that the scientific theories on which he had been building were all nonsense. He was on the point of committing suicide when Coppee advised him to see a priest. It ended in his complete conversion, and adds one more name to the list of literary men whom the Church has won over recently in France.

GERMAN CARDINAL CONSECRATES.

Cardinal Fischer of Cologne, with his great Rome pilgrimage, went to Loreto, where he consecrated the magnificent German chapel in the Basilica of the Holy House. Besides eminent artists of every land, there were present Baron Guttenberg, the Bavarian minister to the holy see; Herr Grutfield, the representative of Germany for six years on the commission for the restoration of the chapel, and other illustrious prelates.

NORWAY.

(Written for The Intermountain Catholic.)

In these days of quick travel combined with cheapness and luxury, a trip to Norway is not outside the question. Of late years quite a multitude of excursionists have visited the Fatherland of Waterfalls and have departed from it well pleased at the many strange sights and scenes they have beheld. There is no doubt but Norway's amiable and much loved king and queen, Haakon and Maud, have done a great deal in bringing Norway into prominence among the English speaking peoples. The first Haakon was the son of the famous Harold Fairhair, who ascended the throne in 860. He was persecuted by his brother and sailed to England where he was brought up in the court of the great King Athelstan. While in England he abandoned the religion of Thor and Odin and became a Christian, and we read that he afterwards brought Christianity to Norway, but it was Olaf Trygvasson who succeeded most in bringing the nation to the feet of Christ.

Norway never yet had seen
One so beautiful of mien
One so royal in attire
When in arms completely furnished
Harness gold-inlaid and burnished
Mantle like a flame of fire.
Thus came Olaf to his own
When upon the night wind blown
Passed that cry along the shore,
And he answered, while the rifted
Streamers o'er him shook and shifted,
"I accept your challenge, Thor."

The present King Haakon is the son of King Christian of Sweden, and when he was called to the throne of Norway, he took the name of Haakon as a compliment to the hardy descendants of the Vikings and caused his youthful son to be called Olaf for the same reason. His queen is the third daughter of King Edward, and the brightest of English princesses. Simple in her tastes, her one desire the happiness and welfare of the people. Queen Maud is the loved of all classes. Before she was married to the sailor king, she was known to her friends under no other name except Harrie. The land over which these youthful sovereigns rule constitutes about one half of the Scandinavian peninsula. Its surface consists of high plateaus with a great ridge of mountains running through its entire length and it is remarkable that in no part of the world are the mountains so clearly defined against the sky as in Norway. As you pass through the country, the never ending contrasts that you meet on all sides are full of interest. Little dales with just a few houses and cultivated fields, hills covered all over with forests of pine, mountains crowned with eternal snow, mighty fiords with waters of an emerald hue, huge vertical rocks with the hissing, frothing torrent sweeping over their face, glorious glaciers resplendent in the sun with snow fields extending for miles, verdant meadows strewn with wild pansies, bluebells, violet and yellow buttercups, everywhere the scene is one of wonder and fascination.

The soil of Norway where there is soil is of very poor quality and consequently the crops are not very luxuriant. They are not a progressive people, especially in the matter of agriculture, and their farm implements are almost the same today as they were in the days of the first Haakon. They grow onions, carrots, potatoes, peas, but they are of a poor quality. There are many mines, principally iron, cobalt, silver and copper, but they are not very productive or paying since the coal to smelt the ore has to be imported from foreign countries at very high prices. A very valuable asset to Norway is the fishing, and many of the people eke out their livelihood in this way. Timber, too, is another valuable asset and you have only to gaze upon the wharves of Belgium, Holland and England to realize what an enormous advantage those pine forests of Norway are to its people in the matter of support. Norwegian pine is noted the world over. The Norwegians are a simple, hardy race, deeply imbued with religion and thoroughly conservative of old-time manners and customs. They have a great respect for the law, human and Divine, and it is a praiseworthy fact that the horrible evil of suicide is least prevalent in Norway than in any other country, which fact I largely attribute to the sober lives the people lead. The Norwegian houses are plain and built mostly of wood, and every window is richly adorned with flower pots of many hues. Like the French, they are a very polite race, and they are constantly saluting each other by a raising of the hat, even though they meet each other twenty times a day. They are as fond of tobacco as the Hollanders and that is saying a great deal, but unlike the Hollanders they are not clean in the use of the weed as they spit everywhere, and when you consider that the spittoon is almost an unknown quantity you can imagine what an evil this is. Their food consists for the most part of fish and potatoes and it is only in the homes of the well-to-do that you ever see meat or any of those other delicacies so characteristic of English-speaking races. Education in Norway is universal and illiteracy is unknown. One of the state laws obliges every person about to get married to be able to read and write. The great ambition of the Norwegian people is to learn English to be able to converse with the English and American tourists who of late years have very much frequented the country. There is almost a total absence of villages, and all the traveler meets with is little towns or isolated farmhouses, and these latter serve as relays for the stage coach or mail service. The roads are very bad, as is only natural, taking into consideration the aspect of the country and the government has the management of them. The people use light vehicles called carioles much after the form of the American buggy and the

only great railroad is one which runs from Trondheim to Christiania. The latter place is the capital and derives its name from King Christian IV, by whom it was founded about 300 years ago. It hardly deserves the name of city, as it is nothing more than an assemblage of dwelling houses and curious looking stores, with but few public buildings, and the streets are rugged, dirty and narrow. The present population of Christiania is about 100,000. Trondheim was once the capital, and the only remarkable thing about it at the present day is the Cathedral, where the kings are crowned. Built after the old Norman style, it is cruciform in shape and stands in the midst of a large and badly kept cemetery. Pilgrimages are made to this church from all parts of Norway as it was raised up as a monument to the great saint and king—St. Olaf, a name the Norwegians hold in the greatest veneration and love. Bergen is the most beautiful town in Norway. Like Trondheim, it was formerly the capital and a place of great commercial importance, but of late years Christiania has supplanted both. It is situated in the midst of mountains, and they, as it were, shut it in completely from the outside world for here you will find old Norse manners and customs in their pure state. The government of Norway is monarchical somewhat after the fashion of England, with two houses of parliament, called the upper and lower house. The members of these houses are returned not by the direct vote of the people, but by electors who are chosen for every town or village by the resident voters. The people choose the electors and these electors choose the members of parliament. From a tourist point of view Norway is an excellent country to visit, but to make a long stay there, well, that is another question, and I venture to say no European would enjoy or sigh after a permanent home there. Simple, hardy, hospitable, warlike like their ancestors of old, they love their foaming cascades, snow crowned mountains and world renowned fiords, and seek not after the progressive spirit which so characterizes the European nations of our day.—By Cabin.

COLLIERIES SHUT DOWN FOR PRIEST'S FUNERAL

A most remarkable tribute to a priest was paid recently at the funeral of the Rev. Henry F. O'Reilly, rector of the Church of the Annunciation, at Shenandoah, Pa., for thirty years. Twenty-five collieries, employing more than 16,000 men and boys in the Shenandoah and Mahanoy valleys, were shut down to enable the workers to pay their respects to the dead priest. The public schools at Shenandoah, Mahanoy City and other surrounding communities were closed. All business in Shenandoah was suspended.

More than 200 priests attended the funeral services. Bishop Prendergast of Philadelphia celebrated the Solemn Requiem Mass.

Father O'Reilly died suddenly November 23. He was 64 years old and a native of County Cavan, Ireland. He celebrated the fortieth anniversary of his ordination last year. He had spent nearly all his priestly life in Shenandoah and was the most widely known and highly respected priest in the Pennsylvania coal regions.

The Philadelphia diocese lost another well-known priest in the death of Rev. John P. Connell, pastor of St. Gregory's church, Philadelphia. He was 53 years of age and was born in Eaton, Pa. He was ordained in the Philadelphia cathedral in 1881.

A NEW VERSION OF A GOOD OLD STORY

I heard a rare story the other day of a good Bishop who was visiting an outlying portion of his diocese for the purpose of confirming some of the rising generation. The pastor had ranged the brave band in line, and the Bishop, after asking a few leading questions, requested a little girl to state the definition of matrimony.

And with hands folded, eyes half closed, and generally modest mien, the little one rapidly recited the startling announcement that "matrimony is a state of terrible torment which those who enter it are compelled to undergo as partial punishment for their sins, in order to prepare them for a brighter and better world."

The pastor who had taken great pains to prepare his class was greatly annoyed at this blunder and sharply said: "No, no, Katie, that is not marriage at all; that is purgatory."

"Leave her alone, Father James," said the Bishop with a meaning smile; "leave little Katie alone. What do you or I know about it?"

AN ALPHABET OF PROVERBS.

A grain of prudence is worth a pound of craft. Boasters are cousins to liars. Confession of fault makes half amends. Denying a fault doubles it. Envy shooteth at others and woundeth herself. Foolish fear doubles danger. God reacheth us good things by our own hands. He has worked hard who has nothing to do. It costs more to revenge wrongs than to bear them. Joy is the prince of sorrow. Knavery is the worst trade. Learning makes a man fit company for himself. Modesty is a guard to virtue. Not to hear conscience is a way to silence it. One hour today is two tomorrow. Pride goeth before destruction. Quiet conscience gives quiet sleep. Richest is he that wants least. Some faults indulged are little thieves that let in greater. Trees that bear most hang lowest. Upright walking is sure walking. Virtue and happiness are mother and daughter. Wise men make more opportunities than they find. You will never lose by doing a good turn. Zeal without knowledge is fire without light.

CHAPTER ON THE FRANCISCANS

Pius X and the Religious Orders—Origin of the Franciscans—Rise and Expansion of the Order—Its Contributions to Learning and Science—Statement of Gladstone—Life of St. Francis—His Extraordinary Change of Life—His Companions—Their Mission to the Poor—"Brothers of the Poor" on the Streets of Naples.

In that most admirable encyclical letter addressed, June 17, 1847, to the bishops at large, Pope Pius IX honors the religious orders of the Catholic Church by pronouncing them to be the "Cuscu phantoms of the army of Christ, which have always been the bulwark and ornament of the Christian republic, as well as of civil society." Conspicuous among and in the very front rank of the great teaching and missionary bodies of the Church stands the order founded by St. Francis of Assisi early in the morning of the thirteenth century. The humble origin in the year 1215 of the Fratres Minores, or Franciscans, as we insist, from affection and admiration of St. Francis, upon calling them, marks an epoch in the civilization of the world. The heroism of the Franciscan missionaries in all parts of our habitable earth and their sacrifices on behalf of Christ and humanity challenge the admiration of brave men and stagger belief itself.

"There are some services and triumphs," writes De Montalembert in his great work, "The Monks of the West," "of a deep and silent kind which acquire their due honor only from posterity, and under the survey of history."

Before dispassion itself could begin to admire the services and benefits the Franciscans conferred for seven centuries upon the human race, the light had to penetrate the dark places of the earth where the bones of the martyrs lay unburied. Tardily, but at last and sincerely, unprejudiced man is paying the tribute of his applause and admiration to the heroic fortitude of the saintly men of the Franciscan order who in China, Corea, South and North America bore the banner of the Cross to the barbarian and the savage.

It is late in the day, but not too late, to ask ourselves what manner of men were they who, under accumulated sufferings, and with unparalleled success, succeeded in winning to Christ and to decency the degraded and unknown tribes of Africa, America and the islands of the sea. Well, many of them were members of aristocratic and noble families who had graduated from the best schools of Europe, and some among them have their names carved in the Pantheon of Fame and in the imperishable diptychs of the immortal Church of God. However, this is not the place to enter upon a disquisition of the Great Order or upon the debt of gratitude due to it from the members of the human race and even from the Church itself.

The history of the Catholic church, from the thirteenth to the sixteenth century, was largely the history of the rise and expansion of the Franciscan Order in every part of Europe. St. Anthony of Padua, St. Bonaventure, Blessed John of Parma, St. Bernardine of Siena, Dun Scotus, St. Leonard of Port Maurice belonged to the Imperial Guard of St. Francis, who, from one end of Europe to the other, stormed the strongholds of Satan. They contributed largely to the learning and science of the world. When our thoughts carry us to the halls of the Sorbonne of Paris or to the class rooms of Oxford or Cambridge, we recall the assertion of Mr. Gladstone that their golden age was when the Friars Minor—the Franciscans—sat in the chairs of learning—the cathedra—when Duns Scotus, Adam de Marisco, Alexander of Hales, Ockham and Peckham taught the civilized world.

But it is as a missionary order we love to contemplate the Franciscans and, as the Patriarch of Missionaries, we venerate St. Francis, who has begotten through the gospel the largest family of missionaries born from the prolific womb of the "Bride of Christ," the Catholic Church.

Who, then, was Francis of Assisi? Centuries before northwestern Europe broke apart from the unity of Christendom, a young man, the son of wealthy parents, lay at death's door. This was John Bernardon, who was born in 1182, and was familiarly called Francis by his companions because of his knowledge of the French language, a rare accomplishment in those days. Hope was almost abandoned, when gradually a change for the better set in and the haughty young Francis of the little Italian town of Assisi rose from his sick bed an altered man. Reflections came to him dur-

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